

WASHINGTON STATE Geographic Name Application



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources

Proposed Name: _____

County: _____

Township: _____ Range: _____ Section(s): _____

Lat. _____ N, Long. _____ W (Begin)

Lat. _____ N, Long. _____ W (End)

____ New Name

____ Controversial Name

____ Name Change

____ Location Clarification

____ Spelling Clarification

Description

Type of feature (lake, stream, etc.): _____

Description of feature (location, length, depth, height, size and/or area covered): _____

If a stream, number of months it flows on a yearly basis: _____

Is this feature identified by other names or spellings? Please list variant names: _____

Has it ever been signed, posted, or publicized? If so, when? _____

History

Please provide a brief history of the feature and its immediate surroundings, this might include information on the following: 1 Native American; 2 First settlers; 3 Historical background pertinent to feature; 4 History on how the land is/was used; 5 Natural disasters (floods, fires, etc.) 6 Any significant cultural events. If appropriate, geology, flora and fauna. Cite sources. Use additional pages if needed.

Origin of name: _____

If a commemorative name, provide a brief summary of the ENTIRE life of the person including how and the length of time he/she was associated with the proposed feature: _____

Justification of Proposed Name

What is the usage of feature? _____

Please state why the proposed name will best serve the public interest: _____

How long has the proposed name been in use? By whom? _____

Please list all sources of information used for your research: (maps, books, articles, periodicals, etc. for background history relating to proposed name) _____

What type of support is there for the proposed name?

List all groups and persons who are familiar with the proposed feature and its usage. Please provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and his/her association with knowledge of the geographic feature:

Application submitted by:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____ Date of Application: _____

I am aware that all information submitted is considered to be public information.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please mail completed form along with copies of any additional materials to:

WA State Board on Geographic Names

PO Box 47030

Olympia, WA 98504-7030

(Phone: 360-902-1280 - Fax: 360-902-1778 - Email: bogn@dnr.wa.gov)

WASHINGTON STATE COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

- After receiving a name proposal application, the Committee staff reviews for completeness and justification. The proposal is then placed on the agenda for the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names. An informational summary is prepared for the first stage of consideration (called an “Initial Consideration”).
- Prior to the first meeting, an agenda is sent to the proponent and Committee members. All submitted materials for the name proposal are supplied to the Committee members. At this meeting, the name is acted upon as an “Initial Consideration”.
- After approval of an “Initial Consideration” by the Committee, a public opinion is solicited for information on the feature. Information is received, reviewed, researched, and compiled. Prior to the second meeting, Committee members receive a detailed summary of each name proposal.
- The second time the name appears on the Committee’s agenda, testimony may be heard and a decision may be made by the Committee to approve, deny or defer the feature name proposal. If the Committee members still have unresolved concerns, questions are asked of the applicant. If the applicant doesn’t provide necessary information by the second meeting after the request, the feature name is dropped from the agenda and placed in an inactive file.
- After each meeting all applicants and interested parties are notified of the meeting action taken which may be an **approval, denial, or deferment**. All approved names are forwarded to the Washington State Board on Geographic Names with the committee’s recommendation.
- All approved names by the Washington State Board on Geographic Names are forwarded to the United States Board on Geographic Names for Federal consideration along with the State’s recommendations.
- Names approved by the Washington State Board on Geographic Names are published in the Washington Administrative Code.

Most Often Asked Questions.....

What is the Washington State Board on Geographic Names?

- The Washington State Board on Geographic Names authority is to establish official names and procedures for the retention of official geographical names throughout the state of Washington. The Board coordinates procedures and actions for naming, correcting, or renaming geographical features, as well as coordinating between local, state, and federal agencies and retain the significance, spelling, spirit and essence of names associated with the early history of Washington.

What is the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names?

- Proposals received by the Washington State Board on Geographic Names are first heard by the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names. If approved by the Committee, the proposal is forwarded on to the Board with the Committee's recommendation for approval.
- The Washington State Board on Geographic Names will not consider a name proposal until the Committee has made a recommendation.

Who fills out a Geographic Names Application?

- Citizens who are interested in proposing a new name, resolution for a controversial name, a name change, correction of an established name, location clarification, or a spelling clarification

How long does it take from the time an application is received until it is approved?

The process may take up to one year. Many times delays are due to inaccurate or incomplete information. It's important the application is prepared and completed in a clear and concise manner, providing the Board and Committee with appropriate information to reach the best decision for all parties involved. Upon receipt your application will be reviewed:

- Does it provide the Board and Committee with a clear picture of your proposal and supply solid supporting documentation (copies enclosed for Board and Committee reference)?
- Does this proposal meet the naming guidelines and criteria? Why is important to name this feature? Is there a need?
- Does it best serve the interest of the public? What type of background information has been provided?

- Have you enclosed documentation showing community support? Is the name in local usage (is this feature referred to by a name already? By whom?).

Is this application public information?

- Yes, once it is received by the Committee, it is public information. Your application proposal will be reviewed by many parties during the “Solicitation for Comments” process including community members, county commissioners, members of state agencies, and other organizations and parties that may provide additional information.

How often does the Committee meet?

- The Committee meets two times a year. Meetings are four hours long, scheduled from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Natural Resource Building, in Olympia. The public is invited to attend. Before each meeting an agenda with driving directions is made available on the DNR website (www.dnr.wa.gov) and distributed to those who have requested it.

How often does the Board meet?

- The Washington State Board on Geographic Names is a function of the Washington State Board of Natural Resources. The Board of Natural Resources meets on a monthly basis.

My name proposal has been denied, now what?

- You’ll receive a letter as well as an extraction from the meeting minutes referencing your proposal as well as the reason it was denied.
- Many times the Committee will suggest reapplying in the future with a new name proposal and/or suggestions in order to meet the Board and Committee’s guidelines for feature naming.

My name proposal has been approved by the Committee on Geographic Names, now what?

- All information submitted by you, the proponent, will be forwarded onto the Washington State Board on Geographic Names with the Committee’s recommendation for approval.
- At the next Washington State Board on Geographic Names meeting, the Board will vote to approve your name proposal as the official name for the geographical feature. If approved by the Board, the name is now official on all state maps and publications. If your proposal is denied by the Board, it will be sent back to the Committee with the Board’s concerns.

My name proposal has been approved by the Board on Geographic Names, now what?

- You'll receive a letter and an extraction of the meeting minutes which reference your proposal and comments made during the discussion process.
- The approved name, all file information, minutes, opinion and comments by interested parties, and any other pertinent materials are forwarded to the United States Board on Geographic Names located in Washington D.C. The proposal is then placed on a docket for consideration at the Federal level. If approved at the Federal level, the name will also appear on all federal maps and reference.

Note: This process may take up to one to three years due to the abundance of naming requests under consideration at the Federal level.

WASHINGTON STATE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES NAMING GUIDELINES

Minimum Guidelines Established by Law:

- Serve the public interest.
- Avoid the duplication of names for similar features whenever possible.
- Establish the official names for features within Washington State.
- Assign names to features for which no single generally accepted names have been in use.
- Retain the significance, spelling, and color of names associated with the early history of Washington States.

Naming Guidelines:

In addition, the Washington State Board on Geographic Names is authorized to establish policies to carry out the purposes of the law. Guidelines for acceptable names are:

- Names in dominant local usage that are strongly supported by local residents.
- Names significant to the early history of Washington State, such as names of Native American, pioneer or pertinent foreign origin.
- Names created by municipal councils or other local governing bodies, unless the name is in conflict with the established principles of the Washington State Board on Geographic Names.
- Names that conform to the flavor of the existing names in the area.
- Pertinent, concise names in good taste, without derogatory or defamatory implications.
- Names that are not duplicated within the State, particularly in small or contiguous areas.
- Names that are not located in designated Wilderness Areas.

Additional Guidelines:

- One name is preferable for all parts of the same feature, such as the main stem of a stream or the length of a single mountain range.
- It is preferable that the name of a river follow its longest branch.
- Hyphens and apostrophes should be avoided.
- Names with commercial overtones should be avoided.

Commemorative Names:

- The person being commemorated must not be living.
- The person must have been deceased **at least five (5) years** before the Washington State Board on Geographic Names will consider the application.
- Only one feature of a kind may be named after the same person.
- The person should have enduring fame to the region.
- Public service credentials should be considered.
- The relative importance of a feature must be equal to the importance of the person being honored. Thus, it is inappropriate to name a major peak for a relatively unknown individual, or a small pond for a major personality.
- The person should have been closely associated with the feature.

Changes in naming, spelling, or application:

- Changes in existing names are generally limited to the elimination of names that are inappropriate, duplicative, defamatory or derogatory; and to the correction of names that have historically changed or been corrupted from their original form.
- Changes in spelling are encouraged in order to standardize the form of a single, identical name given to related features, to eliminate the use of the possessive apostrophe; and to correct obvious spelling errors.
- Changes in application are encouraged when the name is applied to the wrong feature, or where the title does not correctly reflect the technical definition of the feature to which applied.

**WASHINGTON STATE COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES
DECISION CRITERIA**

Each decision of the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names related to misapplied names, misspelled names, new names and name changes is based upon the unique circumstances surrounding the proposal. The Committee, in its decision making process, uses all resources available to it, including its technical consultants, historical and ethnic experts, local input and governmental sources of all kinds.

Committee decisions are usually classified into, but not limited to, the following seven criteria. Each of these criteria are classified according to their influence in the decision making process.

	Misapplied	Misspelled	New	Change
Local verbal & written use	H	H	H	H
Local group recommendation & support	H	H	H	H
Spelling & form conform to other names in the area	L	L	M	L
No duplication within a particular county	H	L	H	M
Historical significance	M	L	M	H
Support by federal, state or local government	H	H	M	L
If named for an individual, the person must be connected to the feature in an historical way	---	L	H	H

H = High M = Medium L = Low

Directions to the Natural Resources Building Olympia, WA

1111 Washington St. SE, Olympia WA 98504

From North:

Take I-5 Exit 105A. Follow the "State Capitol" lane, which parallels the freeway for 1/4 mile.

From South:

Take I-5 Exit 105. Keep to the LEFT, following the "State Capitol" lane.

Go through the Roundabout and the tunnel. At first traffic light (Capitol Way), turn RIGHT. Turn RIGHT again at next traffic light (11th Ave). At next traffic light (Washington St), turn RIGHT once more. Park in visitor parking lot, on the LEFT side of street.

Parking Costs \$1.50 per hour, weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but is free on evenings and weekends. Parking fees can be paid by debit and credit cards, \$1 bills or by coin.

